



Department of City Development
City Plan Commission
Redevelopment Authority of the City of Milwaukee
Neighborhood Improvement Development Corporation

Lafayette L. Crump
Commissioner

Vanessa L. Koster
Deputy Commissioner

Ald. Brostoff
3rd Ald. District

CITY PLAN COMMISSION ZONING REPORT

File No: [240661](#) and [240901](#)

Location: 2716, 2730 and 2740 North Humboldt Boulevard, on the east side of North Humboldt Boulevard, north of East Center Street

**Applicant/
Owner:** Living in Community Milwaukee, LLC

**Current
Zoning:** Two-Family Residential (RT4 – 2716 and 2740 N. Humboldt Bl.) and Industrial Mixed (IM – 2730 N. Humboldt Bl.), and located within the Milwaukee River Greenway Site Plan Review Overlay Zone (SPROZ)

**Proposed
Zoning:** Industrial Mixed (IM) and located within the Milwaukee River Greenway SPROZ

Proposal: This zoning change was requested by Living in Community Milwaukee, LLC and will allow the 2716 and 2740 North Humboldt Bl., zoned RT4, to be combined with 2730 North Humboldt Bl., zoned IM, for the construction of a cohousing residential development known as River Trail Commons. A total of 40 residential units will be provided within 3 buildings, along with shared space and amenities, as well as vehicular and bicycle parking. The 40 residential units are anticipated to be owned individually by the residents. Two 8-unit townhouse-style buildings will be located along N. Humboldt Bl., and one 24-unit multi-family building will be located to the east, at the rear of the site and will also include shared amenity space. An outdoor common space will be located within the courtyard formed by the three buildings. Vehicular access will be from an existing alley off of E. Center Street and pedestrian access will be from N. Humboldt Bl.

Per the applicant, the modern cohousing typology was developed in Denmark in the 1960's and includes major tenants such as shared amenity spaces, condominium ownership format, fostering of communal bonds and interaction, low turnover rate, emphasis on pedestrian, bicycle and mass transit, and group ownership of shared tasks. This specific project will have communal amenities such as a community garden, corridor library, children's play room, workshop,

reservable guest suites, and multifunction room as well as ample outdoor lounge space and interspersed alcoves.

Since this is a base zoning change, specific development plans are not part of the file. The applicant intends to apply for Board of Zoning Appeals (BOZA) approval for items relating to ground floor glazing and residential units located along the Humboldt Bl. frontage. A Certified Survey Map (CSM) has been submitted to combine the three parcels into one after the zoning change is complete.

Additionally, this development site is within the Milwaukee River Greenway Site Plan Review Overlay Zone (MRGSPROZ). The applicant has submitted an exhibit that outlines the applicable overlay standards and how this proposal meets them. Below is additional information regarding the MRGSPROZ.

SPROZ Standards:

The Milwaukee River Greenway Site Plan Review Overlay Zone (MRGSPROZ) was established in 2010 to provide standards that balance protecting the primary environmental corridor (PEC) and creating high quality development along the upper reaches of the Milwaukee River. The overlay zone outlines 6 standards that a proposal must meet in order to be compliant. Several of the criteria are not applicable as they relate to the Primary Environmental Corridor (PEC) and the Top of bluff (TOB), and the subject site sits farther away from the PEC and TOB than the maximum setback required by the overlay zone.

At the time the MRGSPROZ was established, two other files were established relating to stormwater management regulations (FN 081664) and tree protection (FN 081570). These requirements are outside of the zoning code and regulated by the Dept. of Public Works, and the applicant has been in communication with them to ensure that any applicable rules are met.

The MRGSPORZ establishes 6 goals that this project addresses:

1. Preserve the Primary Environmental Corridor (PEC) and promote the natural beauty and environmental quality of the area.
 - a. Response: This site sits 55' away from the outer extent of the PEC and thus makes no direct impact on the PEC through land disturbance.
 - b. Stormwater management will be addressed in compliance with s. 120-7 and 120-14 of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances so as to limit detrimental stormwater runoff.

2. Promote water quality protection, bluff stability, erosion control, preservation of ecology and natural habitat and a tree-root protection zone for the PEC.
 - a. Response: While the site sits outside of the PEC, the project will follow stormwater management guidelines contained in s. 120-7 and 120-14 of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances. There are no trees of

appreciable diameter on the site, but several will be planted as part of the landscape plan.

3. Enhance the Milwaukee River Corridor by encouraging high quality, sustainable design.
 - a. Response: The project incorporates several sustainable features, including part of the common house utilizing mass-timber structure and the multi-family building having conduit run to be solar-ready with an aim to add solar panels within several years, 2 electric vehicle charging stations with 4 simultaneous charging ports, southern exposure glazing will be shaded, along with many others.
 - b. Project emphasizes encouraging non-vehicular transportation via enhanced bike storage facilities, reduction of surface parking area, and proximity and connection to the adjoining Beerline and Oak Leaf Trails.
4. Promote high quality development that is consistent with the City's comprehensive plan.
 - a. Response: Great care has been taken to ensure that the project complies with all design guidelines as well as incorporates high impact design features while remaining architecturally appropriate for the Gordon Park and Riverwest residential neighborhood contexts.
 - b. Project features veneer brick and as much wood as possible, with the common house utilizing exposed decorative steel and mass timber structure.
5. Ensure buildings fit within the context in which they are built.
 - a. Response: The neighborhood-facing buildings are townhouse in massing and contain articulation and variation consistent with the many single-family homes and duplexes nearby.
 - b. On the park-side, the multi-family and common house buildings are more commercial in massing and articulation, while details such as mass timber structure and a brick veneer base ensure that a human scale is maintained and material selection ensures that maintenance and vandalism won't be problematic.
6. Facilitate transitions from commercial corridors and adjacent neighborhoods to the environmental corridor:
 - a. Site layout and material selections have played a key role in facilitating a smooth transition from the residential neighborhood

west of the site to the environmental corridor. Project is oriented around a central open green courtyard that will feature green landscaping and a community garden.

- b. Wood features heavily in the material expression of the buildings via exposed timber structure. Where wood is not being utilized, colors have been selected from a natural color palette.

The proposal meets the applicable design standards of the MRGSPROZ as follows:

- Building and site placement:
 - Site is not inside the PEC, and is set back approximately 55' from it.
 - Entire site is more than 50' from the TOB, and sits approximately 165' back from it.
 - Building height is less than the maximum allowed 60'.
 - There is no surface parking located on the river-side of the site.
- Building design:
 - No EIFS is being utilized on the buildings, thereby meeting the overlay requirement that EIFS is not used on the river-facing facades.
 - There will not be any exposed CMU or vinyl/aluminum siding on the buildings following the guidance of the overlay.
 - The building facades facing the river to the east are not blank, and the rear (easternmost) building does not contain any curtainwall glass, also satisfying the overlay's requirements.
- Signage:
 - No signage is anticipated at this time for the river-facing facades of the building, but if that changes, the signage will be Type A as required by the overlay zone.

Community Outreach:

A community meeting was hosted by the applicant/developer on September 14th at the Gordon Park Pavilion located at 2828 N Humboldt Bl. The meeting was an open house-style event. The applicant reported a positive turn out in support of the project. There was one member of the public in opposition. DCD has received concerns from neighbors about the proposal to utilize the existing north-south alley off of East Center St. to access the development. The developer would pave the alley at their cost as part of the development. DPW analyzed the alley access plan and determined that the proposed connection to East Center Street is functional. Per the plans submitted there will be 25 parking spaces within the development. DPW concluded that this number of vehicles will not create an unmanageable amount of traffic and that this level of traffic to be comparable to traffic volumes expected in other east side alleys, many of which are narrow.

Adjacent Land Use: The parcels are surrounded to the north, south, and west by housing units zoned Two-Family Residential (RT4). To the east is land zone Park (PK) including the Beer Line Trail and the Milwaukee River.

Consistency with Area Plan: The proposed development is within the boundaries of the Northeast Side Area Plan. The Northeast Side Area Plan supports new development on vacant or underutilized land that reinforces compact and pedestrian-friendly development patterns, adds to the diversity of housing choices in the area, supports opportunities for owner occupancy, and protects the natural environmental corridor along the Milwaukee River. The proposed development would repair the traditional built street edge along N. Humboldt Blvd. with well-articulated, pedestrian-friendly building facades and create unique housing options in the area that support access to transit and public open space. The proposed development complies with the standards and intent of the Milwaukee River Greenway Site Plan Review Overlay Zone and is consistent with the Northeast Side Area Plan.

Previous City Plan Action: 05/04/2010 – City Plan Commission recommended approval of an ordinance relating to storm water management regulations applicable to properties within the Milwaukee River Greenway SPROZ ([FN 081664](#))

08/2014 – City Plan Commission recommended approval of an ordinance relating to tree protection in the Milwaukee River Greenway SPROZ ([FN 081570](#))

05/04/2010 – City Plan Commission recommended approval of the creation of Milwaukee River Greenway SPROZ generally located North of the former North Avenue Dam to the City Limits at East Silver Spring Drive in the 1st, 3rd and 6th Aldermanic Districts ([FN 081568](#))

05/04/2010 – City Plan Commission recommended approval of the creation of design standards for Milwaukee River Greenway SPROZ ([FN 081569](#))

05/17/2007 – City Plan Commission recommended approval of the creation of Milwaukee River Greenway Corridor Interim Study Overlay Zone ([FN 070127](#))

05/17/2007 - City Plan Commission recommended approval of the creation of study plan for the Milwaukee River Greenway Corridor Interim Study Overlay Zone ([FN 070124](#))

Previous Common Council Action: 05/25/2010 – Common Council approved an ordinance relating to storm water management regulations applicable to properties within the Milwaukee River Greenway SPROZ ([FN 081664](#))

09/23/2014 – Common Council approved an ordinance relating to tree protection in the Milwaukee River Greenway SPROZ ([FN 081570](#))

05/25/2010 – Common Council approved the creation of Milwaukee River Greenway SPROZ generally located North of the former North Avenue Dam to the City Limits at East Silver Spring Drive in the 1st, 3rd and 6th Aldermanic Districts ([FN 081568](#))

05/25/2010 – Common Council approved the creation of design standards for Milwaukee River Greenway SPROZ ([FN 081569](#))

06/16/2007 – Common Council approved the creation of Milwaukee River Greenway Corridor Interim Study Overlay Zone ([FN 070127](#))

05/30/2007 - Common Council approved the creation of study plan for the Milwaukee River Greenway Corridor Interim Study Overlay Zone ([FN 070124](#))

Recommendation:

The largest parcel within the proposed development site (2730 N Humboldt Bl.) is currently already zoned Industrial Mixed – IM, allowing for multi-family residential development consistent with the context of Humboldt Bl., which contains a mix of single family, two-family, and multi-family housing. Since the proposed zoning change to change the zoning of the two adjacent parcels from RT4 to IM will allow the three sites that are part of the development boundary to be consolidated and the land combined into one parcel to help facilitate the construction of a cohousing development, and the proposed development is consistent with the goals of the Northeast Side Plan and meets all applicable standards of the Milwaukee River Greenway Site Plan Review Overlay Zone, staff recommends approval of both files.